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THE
PERFECT PLAN
-- OF --
SALVATION:
-- OR --
SAFE GROUND.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is
good."—1 Thess. 5: 21.

BY J. H. MOORE.

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Our Rule of Faith and Practice.

MAN is a religious being. He must have some system of worship. Therefore he needs a guide. We offer him the Bible, as the only safe and perfect guide known to man. This book contains all that is revealed of God and his will to the human race. We regard it as the only Book ever authorized by him, and the only one written by holy men, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

All those desiring to occupy *safe ground* should certainly accept the Bible as their guide in all religious matters. Whatever may be said concerning the merits of other books, we most assuredly know that the Bible is a safe guide. We are also confident that our salvation does not depend upon what is in *other* books, but upon what is in the Sacred Volume that God has given us.

We therefore accept the Bible, and that alone, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. And in doing so, we are confident that we have something all religious bodies in Christendom must accept and acknowledge as absolutely safe; and if we obey from the heart the form of doctrine therein so clearly taught, all must admit that we occupy safe ground.

Among Christians there can be no dispute as to the Bible being a safe guide. Whatever disputes or doubts

may exist, are about other books. In them is where all the doubts may be found. Then, in accepting the Bible as our guide, we place ourselves, in this respect, beyond the reach of doubts. People may have their disciplines and confessions of faith, and even place great confidence in them, but they must always remain in doubt concerning their correctness or lawfulness. Furthermore, we certainly are not to be judged by the contents of other books, but by the Bible. The rules laid down in other works may be good, and even useful, but we are not to be judged by them. The Bible is the book which is to be opened on the day of judgment, and by that, and that alone, are we to be judged. Jesus said: "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12: 48. This he said in reference to the judgment. And since the Bible is the only book, by which we are to be judged in the last day, it is certainly important that we do our utmost to conform our lives to it.

IT IS SAFE TO OBEY THE BIBLE.

It never has been unsafe, or wrong, to obey all that God has required of his people, but it has always been unsafe *not* to obey him. It is not a question whether it is safe to believe and obey the Written Word, but, is it safe *not* to believe and obey it? All must certainly admit that the man who obeys the Bible is not only right, but on safe ground. Is the man who does not obey it either right or safe? Here is where we find the doubts.

Among the believers in the Holy Scriptures, it is not questioned whether or not there is a place of happiness for the righteous. This is undisputed; no one has the least reason to doubt it. But, Is there a place of punishment for the wicked? is the question that troubles the people.

The same revelation that declares there is a heaven, also states just as plainly that there is a hell. You show me a man who does not believe in the future punishment of the

wicked, and I will show you one who does not obey the Bible. Whenever I find a man who obeys from the heart that form of doctrine once delivered to the saints, I always find one, who not only believes that the righteous have the promise of eternal life, but that there is a place of punishment reserved for those who obey not God's holy commandments. That the righteous occupy safe ground has never been questioned; but do the wicked occupy ground that is either right or safe? This is the unsafe ground, if there is any to be found. If there is none here, then there is no future danger. Even those who believe that all mankind will be saved, whether they obey the Gospel or not, are all the while preaching their doctrines as though a man *had* to believe it in order to be saved.

WHO IS SAFE?

Since all are agreed that there is a place of happiness in the future,—a fact which is universally admitted,—now the question is, Who shall enjoy that happiness in the future world? That those who obey the Gospel will, is admitted by both saint and sinner. This much, then, is settled. We know that they are safe. There is not one doubt about this. But now comes the fearful question: Can those who do not obey the Gospel be safe? Here grave doubts come in. There are no doubts respecting the destiny of the righteous, but that of the sinner is all uncertain.

Let us ask some of those, who hold this universal salvation, a few questions: Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God? The reply is, Certainly we do. Then, is it right to obey the Word of God? Again their answer must be the same. Does not the man who obeys the teachings of the Bible, as a rule, enjoy life as well as those who violate them? Certainly; he is the happiest man among us. Very well, will he not also be happy in the world to come? Here they must give the same reply. Now then, in view of this important subject, I summon the

whole Universalist Fraternity, and ask them to render an impartial verdict in the case. It is agreed that the Bible is the Word of God, that it is right to obey it, and that the man who does so will be happy in this world and also in the world to come. Now then, I want to know if that man is not *infallibly* safe? Their whole Fraternity must respond in the affirmative. But is the man right who does *not* obey the Bible? *Is he infallibly safe?* Here is where the doctrine of universal salvation brings in the difficulties. Then the man, who willfully ignores the teachings of the Scriptures, is not safe; he is, beyond question, occupying ground that is questionable. He is running the risk of losing both soul and body in hell.

ONE SYSTEM OF RELIGION.

We are confronted on every hand by conflicting theories and discords concerning the Christian religion. The masses have become so confused that thousands have grown seemingly indifferent. Amidst these conflicting theories we desire to point out a course that must remain unquestionably safe.

If the Scriptures teach anything at all, they certainly set forth the following:

1. One God, who is the Father of us all, the Creator of all things, the one true and living God.
2. One Lord, the only begotten Son of God; our Redeemer, the Christ, the Head and Founder of the Christian church.
3. One Spirit, our Comforter, which is to guide us into the way of all truth.
4. One church, of which Jesus Christ is the Head, Founder and Law-giver. The "Church of the living God,—the one body."
5. One Law, which is the New Testament,—a perfect law, to which we must not add, and from which we dare not subtract.

6. One faith, of which Jesus Christ is both Author and Finisher,—a faith which is made perfect by works.

7. One baptism, which is administered “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

All true believers must worship this one God, obey and follow this one Lord, be guided by this one Spirit, be connected with this one body, even as called in one hope of their calling; obey this one law, be in full possession of this one faith, and submit to this one baptism. All admit this to be safe ground; nobody denies it; about this there is no question, all the trouble is about the other systems.

In the beginning of the Christian dispensation there was but one true evangelical church; all the apostles and disciples of Christ were connected with this one body. They had but one law,—the Gospel. They all heard this, believed and obeyed it, so that in faith and practice there were no divisions among them, but they were perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, all speaking the same thing. They heard, believed, and obeyed the whole law. About those who believed and obeyed the whole law being on safe ground, there is not one particle of doubt, all the doubts are about those who did *not* obey the *whole* law.

This one church was founded by Jesus Christ, and is the only church ever founded by him; all other churches were founded by somebody else. This church had one uniform system of faith and practice; the members had but one law to govern them, and that was the Gospel; nothing more and nothing less. Paul did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God to the members of this church. The Gospel that they obeyed was precisely the same that we now have in the New Testament. This was their law, and their only law. They not only believed it, but obeyed it.

They did not select a part of the law to suit their own taste; they took the *whole* law. Their plan of salvation was then safe. About it there was no trouble, because

they had the whole law, and nothing but the law. The only troubles were about other plans that did not embrace the entire law, and there is just where all the difficulties are to-day. Everybody admits that they who obey the *whole* law are on safe ground; the only difficulty is about those who obey but a *part* of the law; here is the trouble in this world. There is just where the trouble is going to be in the world to come.

No church can be the church of Christ unless it is governed by the *whole* law. A church that obeys but a part of the law is not the church founded by Christ. That the church which carries out the form of doctrine "delivered unto the saints," is the church of God, the body of Christ, will be questioned by none; the only difficulty is about other churches.

If the great Judge of all the earth sees proper to merely wink at their departures and conflicting speculations, and admit them through the shining gates of heaven to the everlasting "paradise of God," he certainly will not exclude those who have kept the "*unity* of the faith" and "obeyed from the heart" *all* things whatsoever Christ and the apostles have commanded. Conceive the idea, if you can, that it could so turn out, that *all* mankind, irrespective of character, will be made holy and happy in the future world; will not those who *obey* the Gospel be as happy as the others? Is not the ground, then, that we occupy, safe?

THE GOSPEL PLAN OF SALVATION.—IN TWO PARTS.

As before remarked, the church founded by Jesus Christ was governed by the Gospel. Whatever this required, the early Christians did; they never called any of the commandments *non-essential*. This Gospel requires all to believe, repent, confess and be baptized. We have no account of any person being in this church who was not baptized. Baptism was for, or in order to, the remission of sins,—the initiatory rite into the church. Through this all

had to pass into the church. This was to be "born of water," to be "baptized into Christ,"—into the church. The plan of salvation, as presented to us in the New Testament, is properly in *two parts*:

1. *Salvation from sin, i. e., pardon*,—this is guaranteed on condition of:

(1) FAITH. "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

(2) REPENTANCE, or reformation of life, or a change of conduct. Peter says, "Repent, every one of you." God now commandeth all men every-where to *repent*." "Cease to do evil and learn to do well."

(3) CONFESSION. "If thou shalt *confess* with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth *confession* is made unto salvation." Just before the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, he made the following confession: "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10: 32.

(4) BAPTISM. "Repent and be *baptized* every one of you." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized."

(5) THE PROMISE, then, is (a) the forgiveness of sins and (b) the gift of the Holy Spirit. "He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*," i. e., pardoned. "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Here, then, is the first promise, and now comes the second, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2: 38.

2. *Salvation in Heaven*.—The commission given by Christ, and recorded in Matthew, 28: 19, 20, is in two parts: (a) "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the

Holy Ghost." (b) "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Wilson's translation says, "All things which I have enjoined upon you." The term "*all things*" here does not mean just a *part* of the commandments, but *all* of them. Of the Pentecostians, after they were baptized, it is said, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread." Acts 2: 42.

The first part of the plan of salvation is intended for the sinner, telling him what to do in order to be pardoned or get into the church,—what to do to be a Christian. The second is for the saint, telling him what to do in order to obtain glory and honor and immortality. The first takes him into the church, and the second tells him what to do after he is in the church. The first *makes* him a Christian, and the second *keeps* him such. The first plucks him from Satan and places him in the church militant, the second keeps him in the church militant and prepares him for the church triumphant.

FAITH, REPENTANCE AND BAPTISM.

This Gospel, in order to salvation, requires faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please God;" and, "he that believeth not shall be damned." That faith is essential to salvation is not questioned.

Peter, being guided by the Holy Spirit of God on the Day of Pentecost, says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you." God "now commanded all men every where to repent." Acts 17: 30. It is maintained by not a few that faith, and that alone, is all that is required in order to pardon. But, since we are seeking safe ground on this subject,—ground which none dare question,—suppose you have faith only, and, on the other hand, we have faith and repentance. Now, then, let the reader decide the question, Who occupies the safe position? If God requires faith only, then we have that as well as they, but if, on the con-

trary, he commanded all men every-where to repent, and requires both faith and repentance, then are we not safe? If this is not safe ground on this position, there is none to be found.

But, in addition to faith and repentance, Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and Peter told the Pentecostians to "be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." When Paul was at Damascus, one Ananias came to him and said, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22: 16. These quotations introduce the subject, as well as the validity of baptism. On this, as well as other positions, we desire to occupy ground that is infallibly safe.

It is never a question whether it is safe to be baptized. The uncertainty is about *not* being baptized; here is the unsafe ground. Other things considered, we know that a man does right when he is baptized, but the doubtful point is, Does he do right who is *not* baptized?

In the time of the apostles we know that there were persons in the church who had submitted to this ordinance; hence, the only difficulty to be settled is, were there any in the church who were *not* baptized? We accept it as a fact, that a man can be baptized into Christ, but, can he get into Christ and *not* be baptized? "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Gal. 3: 27.

The Holy Spirit, by the mouth of the Apostle Peter, said to the penitent believers on the Day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized every one of you . . . for the remission of sins." Why must they be baptized? ANSWER.—"For the remission of sins." Was it safe to submit to Peter's instruction on the occasion? "They that gladly received his word were baptized." Acts 2: 41. Were they not on safe ground when they believed, repented and were baptized for the remission of sins? Every candid reader must admit that they were. Very well; were

they on safe ground who simply believed and were not baptized? Here is where the trouble comes in; not about those who did what Peter commanded, but those who did not obey him.

Faith changes the heart from unbelief to belief. In repentance the conduct is changed, there being a turning from evil to good, or a turning away from sin to righteousness. In baptism the relation is changed from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. This is the new birth, when the penitent believer becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. This is accomplished by the Word of God, which is the seed, being planted in the heart and growing until the new birth is brought about. Back of this work is the Holy Spirit, which uses the Word to effect the conversion of the sinner. The Word is the sword of the Spirit, or the instrument used by the Spirit to accomplish its work in turning the people away from their sins and leading them into the way of righteousness.

Perhaps we can give satisfactory reasons on the question. We therefore start out with the following inquiry: Is baptism a commandment of God? All must answer that it is. Is it right to obey the commandment of God? All Christendom must admit that it is. So far there is no trouble. But we have another question: Is it *safe* not to obey the commandment of God? Here the danger comes in. All admit that it is safe to obey the commandment of God, and also right. That being true, it must be infallibly right; and if infallibly right, then, as a logical consequence, infallibly safe.

Conceive it to be a fact, if you can, that baptism is not one of the conditions of pardon. Do you suppose that God will condemn us simply because we were baptized? If he does not demand that we be baptized, then are we not as safe as you? But let us turn the scale a moment; supposing it to be a fact, that "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

John 3: 5. Then how about your unbaptized persons? The one who is baptized is on safe ground, whether you are or not. If, in this case, you wish to occupy ground that is infallibly safe, "arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Remember, however, that it is the blood of Christ that cleanseth us from all sin, and, when buried with Christ by baptism, we, in a figure, come in contact with his blood.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM.

That our Lord was baptized in one way, and that only, none will dare question; hence there was but one example set by him, all other examples were set by somebody else. Without entering the field of regular controversy, we may easily determine what is safe ground here.

It is not questioned whether immersion is right, but are sprinkling and pouring right? About immersion being baptism, there is not one particle of dispute among men of learning; all the dispute is concerning sprinkling and pouring. That immersion is safe ground, is admitted the world over. Never has its validity been called in question by any person of much note or learning. And in addition to this, every leading denomination of Christendom either does, or once did, admit immersion to be valid. There is not one church on earth, that holds any respectable claim to antiquity, that did not, at one time, practice immersion and admit it to be safe ground.

When Christ commanded the apostles to baptize the nations, he used the Greek word *baptizo*. That this word means immersion, is not denied by a single Greek Lexicographer of any note. In short, I do not know of one writer who denies it. All admit it to be immersion or dipping. The only point of dispute is whether it means sprinkling or pouring. Here some learned men disagree, not about *baptizo* meaning immersion, but about it meaning sprinkling and pouring.

Immersion is universally admitted to be safe, and is ground even beyond dispute. We at once reach safe ground as to the action, and that is *immersion*,—a method that we all know is right. When we select immersion and that alone, then, and not till then, do we have a method that is infallibly safe, a method that none dare call in question,—a method that is sanctioned by all the leading denominations of the earth; a method that has been practiced in every age of the Christian church, and a method whose origin cannot be found this side of the introduction of Christian baptism.

BACKWARD AND FORWARD IMMERSION.

We do not propose at this time to settle the question whether it is possible to obey any of the commandments of God by going forward. The question is, Can we obey any of them by going backward? We do not intend to settle the question whether God is pleased with the *forward* action in baptism, but will he sanction the *backward* action? Nobody questions the validity of the forward action, the trouble is about the backward motion. We all know that our Great Law-giver has given commands that required a forward motion, and about this there is no dispute, but did he ever, since the world began, give a command that required a backward action?

All leading religious denominations agree that the forward action is both safe and right, but the great difficulty is about the backward action, is it either safe or right? We know that the forward is,—and, furthermore, we learn that in the time of the apostles the administrator placed his right hand on the head of the candidate, and gently bowed his head forward till he was fully immersed. So write the ablest Baptist historians. I know of no instance, in the practice of the early Christians, where they ever practiced the backward action; nor did the backward action come into use, among those who were immersed, till some time after

the beginning of the Reformation (A. D. 1517). It was then introduced by a class of people who imagined that our Savior was laid on his back in burial; hence, in the likeness of that imaginary manner of burying, they began laying the body backward into the water, and the various religious denominations that have sprung from them, still use the backward action, not because it was practiced by the apostles, or any of their immediate successors, but because it has, in some way, crept in among them.

There are many who condemn sprinkling and pouring because they are human inventions, and at the same time practice the backward action, which is not yet four hundred years old, lacking not less than 1440 years of being as old as Christian baptism.

In the confirmation of our position, respecting the origin of the backward and the antiquity of the forward immersion, we present the following extract from Judson, a learned Baptist writer, whose prejudices were wholly on the side of backward immersion. His frank and deliberate concession should be regarded with more than ordinary interest:

“Immersion, however, maintained the ground until the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Westminster Assembly of Divines voted, by a majority of one, that immersion and sprinkling were indifferent. Previous to that period, the Baptists had formed churches in different parts of the country; and having always seen infants, when baptized, taken into the hands of the administrator, and laid under water in the baptismal font, and not having much, if any, communication with the Baptists on the Continent, they thought, of course, that a candidate for baptism, though a grown person, should be treated in the same manner, and laid backward under the water. They were probably confirmed in this idea by the phrase, ‘buried in baptism.’ The consequence has been that all the Baptists in

the world, who have sprung from the English Baptists, have practiced the backward posture.

“But from the beginning it was not so. In the apostolic times the administrator placed his right hand on the head of the candidate, who then, under the pressure of the administrator’s hand bowed forward, aided by the genuflection, which instinctively comes to one’s aid, when attempting to bow in the practice, until his head was submerged and rose by his own effort.”—*Judson on Baptism*, p. 112.

To suppose that God will sanction the backward baptism, is to simply put the inventions of men on an equal footing with the “thus saith the Lord.” We are not aware that he ever did sanction the introduction of a human invention in the room of a Divine appointment, and to presume that he will in this case, is neither reasonable nor necessary. It is, then, not even so much as questioned whether the forward baptism is right, but is the backward right? Here are all the doubts. We will stand on safe ground and go FORWARD in the likeness of our Savior, when he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost.

All the communities of believers, established in the early ages of Christianity, either by the apostles or any of their immediate successors practiced the forward method of baptizing. In the early times no one ever dreamed of baptizing any other way. The Waldenses also practiced the same mode, while none have used the backward method except those who have, in some way, sprung from the English Baptists. Even their own historians regard them as the inventors of this modern method. All the evidence in existence, both Scriptural and historical, is decidedly in favor of the position that the Lord Jesus was baptized by bowing forward under the hand of John the Baptist, and those who propose to follow Jesus rather than man should submit to no other method. This we are certain is not only right but safe.

As this work will likely fall into the hands of many who practice backward baptism, it may be proper to give them a few problems to solve:

1. Find just one case where *backward* immersion was used before the reformation (A. D. 1517).

2. 1 Cor. 10: 2. Since the passage through the Red Sea is a figure of Christian baptism, where is your authority for dipping *backward* when the Israelites were commanded to go *forward*?

3. 1 Pet. 3: 21. As the salvation of Noah and family in the ark is a "like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us," where is the authority for backward baptism in this case, since they did not walk backwards into the ark?

4. Rom. 4: 3, 4, 5. Since Paul says we are planted (baptized) in the likeness of Christ's death (which took place on the cross when he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost), tell us whence you get your authority for baptizing backward in the likeness of his *burial*?

5. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." (Heb. 9: 22.) The blood of Christ was shed while on the cross, where his death took place; in the likeness of this death we are baptized and come in contact, by a figure, with the blood shed here, "which cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1: 7. Will those who dip *backward* in the likeness of Christ's *burial*, where no blood was shed, please tell us where they come in contact with the blood that cleanseth from all sin? Not in the likeness of his *burial*, because there was no blood there; not in the likeness of his *death*, for they do not baptize in that way.

TRINE IMMERSION.

It seems neither reasonable nor necessary that we be called upon to settle the question whether or not *trine* immersion is safe. There are but few who doubt this. The main difficulty is not about *trine* but *single* immersion; here

is where the difficulties come in. Among the unlearned the inquiry is, What was the apostolic method? but not so among the learned ancient Greek and Latin scholars; they all, without one known exception, not only practiced trine immersion, but maintained that it was the method taught by Christ and practiced by the apostles. Even those who practiced the single do not doubt the validity of the three-fold immersion, knowing that in it are embodied all the elements that can possibly be connected with Christian baptism, as taught in the commission. Let this last commission, given by Christ and recorded by Matt. 28: 19, teach what it may, either single or trine immersion, there is no one who can consistently say that trine immersion does not contain all that is therein taught.

I have yet to find the first man who contends that trine immersion does not meet all the demands of the commission. The trouble has been in trying to get single immersion to meet all the demands which the commission requires. If I take a candidate into the water and say, "I baptize thee into the name of the Father" (then dip him), "and of the Son" (dip him), "and of the Holy Ghost" (dipping him the third time), there is no one who will say I did not do just what I said I would. Will anyone say that the candidate was not "baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"? About this there is not, nor can be, any dispute. This we know is right. But if, on the contrary, I should say, "I baptize thee into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," *then dip him*, it is questionable whether I have done just what I said I would do. If, in the former case, I did what I said I would, then, in the latter I did not. The former we know is right, but all the doubts are about the latter.

The formula of baptism,—*"baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"*—as it stands recorded by Matthew (Revised Ver-

sion), is elliptical, and supplying the ellipsis, agreeable with the laws of language, it will read as follows: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and *baptizing them into the name* of the Son, and *baptizing them into the name* of the Holy Ghost."

This is what Paul calls "one baptism" (Eph. 4: 5), or, as Wilson renders it, "*one dipping*," not *one dip*. One dipping is the true meaning of the Greek word *baptisma*, and was so understood by the ancient Greeks, in whose mother tongue the New Testament was first written. In the commission we have three distinct names,—Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is into these three distinct names that we are to be baptized, which cannot be done short of a three-fold immersion. About being baptized into three distinct names with three distinct actions, there is not one particle of dispute. All the difficulty is in trying to baptize a person into these *three* names with *one* action. That a man can be baptized into one name with only one action is a settled fact. But can he be baptized into three names with but one action, is where the controversy comes in. About the former there is no controversy; all the disputing is about the latter.

Whether the commission teaches single or trine immersion, is to be determined chiefly, though not wholly, by the meaning of the language. A learned man determines for himself by his own personal knowledge of the Greek; but, on the other hand, the unlearned must be governed by the best evidence that he can obtain from the testimony of others. To the latter it is sufficient to observe that the commission was originally written in Greek, the native language of the Gentiles, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and it must be evident that they did understand their own language,—in the early ages of the Christian church,—far better than we at this remote period. They have always maintained that the commission teaches trine immersion; and, therefore, from their first embracing of

Christianity in the first century, to the present time, they have practiced the threefold immersion. To doubt this meaning of the Greek commission, is to question millions of native Greek scholars' knowledge of their own mother tongue.

Furthermore, there is not a Christian church, known to me, upon the face of the globe, which holds any just claims to antiquity, that did not at one time practice trine immersion; upon this point I challenge investigation. There is no historian, however well learned, who can trace single immersion, as a practice, beyond the middle of the fourth century. There it was introduced by the authority of Eunomius,—the father of the practice; while, on the other hand, trine immersion can be traced, in an unbroken line, from the present day even unto the Golden Age of the Christian church,—far beyond the origin of either sprinkling, pouring or single immersion. Its origin no man on earth can find this side of the beginning of Christianity itself. Here, then, is a method in which we can confide, one that all leading denominations acknowledge to be valid. Here is safe ground that none dare call in question without condemning their own practice either in modern or ancient times. No one who has been lawfully baptized by this method, is dissatisfied with his baptism; all the dissatisfaction is about single immersion. The simple fact that all leading denominations regard trine immersion as valid baptism, and will receive it into their churches unchallenged, ought to settle the question in the minds of all thinking people. When we have a baptism that is so generally accepted, we may rest assured that it is proper and safe; for it is not at all likely that all leading denominations would happen to agree on the very baptism that was wrong.

FEET-WASHING.

As before stated, the Gospel is properly in two parts,—the one part telling the sinner what is required of him that

he may get into Christ, into the church; and the other, what is required of him after he is in the church. So far we have endeavored to point out safe ground for those seeking pardon of their sins and admission into the body of Christ. By the help of God we now propose to call attention to some duties devolving upon those who have entered the church, and who are willing to go on to perfection in their Christian life. In examining these items, I shall more particularly notice the controverted points, that in them we may find a position which is safe.

I now call attention to feet-washing, as commanded by Christ, when he said to his disciples, "Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." John 13: 13, 14, 15. There are three things connected with this language that will not likely be questioned:

1. Christ washed his disciples' feet.
2. He commanded them to wash one another's feet.
3. The apostles occupied ground that was infallibly safe, whenever they did what Christ commanded them to do. And now, without stopping to consider the merits of the vain speculations, theories and hair-splittings of modern theologians, we at once look for safe ground.

It seems wholly unnecessary to attempt to settle the question, whether it is right to wash one another's feet. Nobody doubts this; all the doubts are about those who do *not* practice feet-washing. That those who do what Jesus commanded, occupy safe ground in this particular, will not likely be questioned; all the difficulty is concerning those who refuse to obey this command. This is just where the trouble was with Peter, not about having his feet washed, but about *not* having them washed. Here is also where the difficulty was about the widows, mentioned in 1 Tim. 5. That those who "washed the saints' feet" had done right,

is questioned by none; the trouble was about those who had *not* washed the saints' feet; and let me warn you, gentle reader, that right here is where some of the difficulties are going to lie in the world to come.

That Christ and the apostles practiced foot-washing, has never been called in question, and that they occupied ground that is infallibly safe, is admitted the world over. Now, then, in view of our eternal welfare, I ask the candid reader, Is there any other safe ground, save that which was occupied by Christ and the apostles? If there is, then point it out and tell us where it is. If we, as a religious body, occupy the same ground occupied by these venerable characters, I then ask, in the name of all reason, Do we not occupy ground that is infallibly safe! The object of this work is not to refute man's speculations; but even suppose the Lord did not intend to make it obligatory upon us to wash one another's feet, do you even presume that he will condemn us simply because we practice this ordinance? Christ and the apostles did the same; and even admitting that it is not binding upon us, we are then safe as well as they. But if, on the contrary, it is binding, then we are safe anyhow. What about those who do not practice it? This is where the danger comes in.

But somebody concludes that it is simply an *act of hospitality* and not a *church ordinance*. Well, suppose you prove it to be an act of hospitality, what does that amount to? You might use precisely the same arguments and prove that *our* practice is an act of hospitality also. We practice it just as Christ and the apostles did. Suppose Peter had told the Lord that foot-washing was simply an act of hospitality, and therefore not binding, do you suppose the Lord would have excused him? If, then, the Lord would not have excused Peter, how do you suppose he is going to excuse you? When Peter refused to have his feet washed, Christ told him, "If I wash thee not, then thou hast no part with me." In view of this, I propose the

following questions: Did Peter occupy safe ground when he said to Christ, "Thou shalt never wash my feet"? Every reader must confess that he did not. Very well, Did he occupy safe ground after he had submitted? Every one must confess that he did. If Peter occupied dangerous ground simply because he refused to submit to the ordinance of feet-washing, what will be your condition if you occupy the same ground?

Feet-washing, as commanded by Christ, is no more designed to cleanse the feet, than baptism for the remission of sins is designed to wash away the filth of the flesh. While both are external acts, they have their spiritual import, and are to the soul what the washing is to the flesh. However honest or learned men, who speculate about feet-washing being an oriental custom or an act of hospitality, may be, they have one special object in view, and that is to keep well-meaning people from doing what the Lord says they ought to do. But if, on the contrary, we follow Christ and not man, then, and not till then, do we occupy ground that is infallibly safe. If we do just what Christ has commanded, regardless of modern speculations, is there anyone who can say that we occupy ground that is not safe?

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In observing the Lord's Supper, the Corinthian church got out of order, and Paul, when correcting them, refers to their disorder in the following language: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." 1 Cor. 11: 20, 21. That the Corinthians had a supper is a settled fact, but it was not the *Lord's* Supper, for the reason that it was their *own* supper.

This is the only place where the term "Lord's Supper" is used in the Bible, and it is therefore important to understand the meaning of the term. There are two very

important facts that lie at the very foundation of this subject:

1. The Lord's Supper must be a *meal*, and
2. That meal must be a *supper*.

That which is not a supper, though it be a meal, cannot be the Lord's Supper, for the reason that it is no *supper* at all. There are people who take the Communion about noon, and then call it the Lord's Supper. What does the reader think of eating supper at noon? Can such a thing be done? Everybody knows that we can eat dinner at noon, but the question is, Can we eat supper at that time? Here is one of the doubts that we meet with. A supper is not only a *meal*, but it is an *evening* meal, a meal eaten at, or near, the close of the day. To talk about eating supper at noon is about as logical as talking about the sun setting in the middle of the day. The Communion consists of a small bit of bread and a sip of wine. Can anyone, according to the general import of language, call that a meal? Let us use a little good common sense. Suppose you were to sit down to a table on which was only one small bit of bread and one sip of wine; could you conscientiously call that a meal? Certainly not. We have no more right to call a small bit of bread and a sip of wine a meal, than our Pedobaptists have for calling sprinkling and pouring baptism. We might give quotations from Greek dictionaries, and prove that the Greek word *deipnon*, which is translated supper, properly means not only a meal, but an evening meal; but, since we are seeking for ground that is not only safe, but such as can be easily understood by all classes of readers, it is probably not necessary to do so in this case.

That the Lord Jesus instituted the Communion in the evening, is a fact that no Bible reader will deny (1 Cor. 11: 23), and so practiced the apostles (Acts 20: 7-11). That they occupied safe ground is another fact equally conclusive. And if we, by walking in their footsteps, also celebrate the death and suffering of the Lord in the even-

ing, we then, side by side with them, occupy the same ground. About this being right, there is no question. The trouble is about those who take it at noon, and not about those who take it after night, as the apostles did.

The Communion is never called the Lord's Supper in the Bible. Supper being a meal, and the bread and wine no meal, it certainly follows that they are not the Lord's Supper. Luke 22: 20. "Likewise also the cup after supper," showing that they had a *supper* in addition to the Communion. Whose supper was this? Was it the "Lord's Supper" or did it owe its existence to somebody else? Who had the Supper prepared? Was it the Lord or was it his disciples? You may call it the passover as much as you please, one thing is certain, it was a *supper*; and for the simple reason that it was prepared according to the direction of the Lord, it was his supper, hence the Lord's Supper. Here is safe ground in this matter, ground that none dare condemn without opposing the practice of Jesus himself. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

THE SALUTATION OF THE HOLY KISS.

The Holy Spirit of God, through the Apostle Paul, has said, "Salute one another with an holy kiss." Rom. 16: 16. God is very precise in giving his commands. In this he not only tells what to do, but *how* to do it. The command is to "salute," but the question may arise, *Whom* shall we salute? Ans.—"One another," or, as Paul elsewhere expresses it, "all the brethren." 1 Thess. 5: 26. But one asks, Who are the brethren? Ans.—The children of God. (Compare 1 John 3: 14 and 5: 2.) He not only tells us to "salute one another," but without leaving the matter to our choice, says it must be with a kiss; not only a kiss, but a "*holy* kiss."

Of all the commandments in the Bible this is perhaps the plainest and the least difficult to be understood. It is spoken of no less than five different times in the epistolary

writings, and each time by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to refuse to obey it is to resist the Holy Spirit of God.

You may say what you please about its being an oriental custom, it is a *command of God*, and even if it had been practiced by every nation under heaven, that would not make it null and void, as the positive commands of God are not predicated upon the world's not doing thus and so.

If you establish the fact that the ancient Greeks, Jews and Persians saluted each other with a kiss, you only prove that they were just that much better, in this particular, than nine-tenths of our modern professors; or you simply prove that they by nature, without the Gospel, obeyed God better than you with all your light and knowledge.

But, in this matter, we are seeking for something that is infallibly safe and need not, for one moment, trouble our minds with modern theories. It is not likely that we are under obligations to prove that it is *safe* to "salute one another with an holy kiss," for I do not believe that there is any one who denies it. It is also a settled fact that the apostles and primitive Christians did thus salute each other; that they were on safe ground is also beyond question, and if we, with them, occupy the same ground, are we not equally safe in this respect?

There is, however, an easy and a satisfactory way of getting this matter fully before us. We start with the inquiry, Is the salutation of the holy kiss a command of God? All parties must admit that it is. It being admitted that it is a command of God, the next question presenting itself is, Is it right to obey the command of God? To this there is but one answer, all admitting that it is right. Then the man who obeys this command does right. Is there anyone who doubts this? Certainly not. Then so far he is safe. But what if he does not obey this command of God? Does he do right? Is he safe? Here is where we meet with the doubts. There is no question about those who carry out

this requirement; all the controversy is about those who do not obey it. Those who obey this command are not dissatisfied with it, either living or dying. Paul, who spake and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit, has given unto us this command, and in his letter to the Galatians (1: 8) says: "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed." That the Gospel of Jesus Christ contains such a command must be admitted by all; about this being right there is no uncertainty; all the uncertainty is about the gospels of men that contain no such commands. Any church, then, that does not obey this injunction does not obey from the heart that form of doctrine once delivered to the saints.

CONCLUSION.

I frequently come in contact with honest and well-meaning people who are almost bewildered by the conflicting theories of modern churches, one saying, Lo! here is Christ; another, Lo! here is Christ, one claiming this part of the Gospel, another has it different, till thousands are driven to the cold grave unprepared to meet their God. With sadness I have looked upon this religious calamity, till my own candid convictions have forced upon my mind the necessity of preparing and publishing this pamphlet, and, amid the conflicts and discords of the religious world, point out to the honest seeker after truth ground that all must concede to be *infallibly safe*. This is the ground that I occupy in my practice, preaching and writing.

If what I have written helps you out of your religious perplexities, give God the glory. "Fear God and keep his commandments."

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